IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with <u>underlining</u> and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please ADD claim 10 and AMEND claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9 in accordance with the following:

1.   (Currently Amended) A sales support information providing method which provides salespersons with information concerning a selling method by using a server, comprising:

transmitting an answer request to salesperson terminals, the answer request requesting each terminal to input an answer choice to the selling method contained in the request;

receiving answer data from the terminals, the answer data of each terminal containing <u>a salesperson ID number and</u> an answer choice input by one of the salespersons for the selling method;

storing the respective answer data corresponding to the salespersons cumulatively as an answer file, the answer file containing records which correspond to the<u> salesperson ID numbers and</u> answer data of the salespersons respectively;

extracting each record from the answer file<u> and reading a salesperson file containing shop ID numbers corresponding to salesperson ID numbers of the salespersons and a shop file containing respective attributes corresponding to the shop ID numbers</u> to increment each of total counts for one or more ~~of predetermined attributes~~ <u>attribute groups each having an attribute matched with</u> ~~which are met by~~<u>an attribute corresponding to</u> a corresponding one of the ~~salespersons~~<u>salesperson ID numbers</u> for the extracted record; and

transmitting <u>each of</u> results of the total counts for said one or more ~~of the predetermined attributes~~<u>attribute groups</u> to<u> a corresponding one of</u> the salesperson terminals ~~which are related to the selling method~~<u>for a salesperson ID number corresponding to a shop ID number having the matched attribute corresponding to one of said one or more attribute groups, the salesperson ID number being obtained by reading of the salesperson file and the shop file.</u>

2.   (Currently Amended) The sales support information providing method according to claim 1 wherein said one or more ~~of the predetermined attributes~~attribute groups include shop attributes of shops which the salespersons belong to.

3.   (Currently Amended) The sales support information providing method according to claim 1 wherein said one or more ~~of the predetermined attributes~~attribute groups include customer attributes of customers which the salespersons are responsible to.

4.   (Currently Amended) The sales support information providing method according to claim 1 wherein said one or more ~~of the predetermined attributes~~attribute groups include salesperson attributes of the salespersons.

5.   (Original) The sales support information providing method according to claim 1 wherein the answer request contains a questionnaire of the selling method.

6.   (Original) The sales support information providing method according to claim 5 wherein the questionnaire is generated by including a selected one of success cases, sent from the salespersons to a bulletin board, and a set of answer choices.

7.   (Currently Amended) A sales support data providing apparatus ~~A computer program embodied therein for causing a computer to execute a sales support information providing method, the method~~ comprising:
      a transmitter transmitting an answer request to salesperson terminals, the answer request requesting each terminal to input an answer choice to a selling method contained in the request;
      a receiver receiving answer data from the terminals, the answer data of each terminal containing a salesperson ID number and an answer choice input by one of salespersons for the selling method;
      a storage storing the respective answer data corresponding to the salespersons cumulatively as an answer file, the answer file containing records which correspond to the salesperson ID numbers and answer data of the salespersons respectively;
      an extractor extracting each record from the answer file and reading a salesperson file containing shop ID numbers corresponding to salesperson ID numbers of the salespersons and a shop file containing respective attributes corresponding to the shop ID numbers to increment

each of total counts for one or more ~~of predetermined attributes~~attribute groups each having an attribute matched with ~~which are met by~~an attribute corresponding to a corresponding one of the ~~salespersons~~salesperson ID numbers for the extracted record; and

a ~~transmitter~~transmitting each of results of the total counts for said one or more ~~of the predetermined attributes~~attribute groups to a corresponding one of the salesperson terminals ~~which are related to the selling method~~for a salesperson ID number corresponding to a shop ID number having the matched attribute corresponding to one of said one or more attribute groups, the salesperson ID number being obtained by reading of the salesperson file and the shop file.

8.   (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium storing a computer program embodied therein for causing a computer to execute a sales support information providing method, the method comprising:

transmitting an answer request to salesperson terminals, the answer request requesting each terminal to input an answer choice to a selling method contained in the request;

receiving answer data from the terminals, the answer data of each terminal containing a salesperson ID number and an answer choice input by one of salespersons for the selling method;

storing the respective answer data corresponding to the salespersons cumulatively as an answer file, the answer file containing records which correspond to the salesperson ID numbers and answer data of the salespersons respectively;

extracting each record from the answer file and reading a salesperson file containing shop ID numbers corresponding to salesperson ID numbers of the salespersons and a shop file containing respective attributes corresponding to the shop ID numbers to increment each of total counts for one or more ~~of predetermined attributes~~attribute groups each having an attribute matched with ~~which are met by~~an attribute corresponding to a corresponding one of the ~~salespersons~~salesperson ID numbers for the extracted record; and

transmitting each of results of the total counts for said one or more ~~of the predetermined attributes~~attribute groups to a corresponding one of the salesperson terminals ~~which are related to the selling method~~for a salesperson ID number corresponding to a shop ID number having the matched attribute corresponding to one of said one or more attribute groups, the salesperson ID number being obtained by reading of the salesperson file and the shop file.

9.   (Currently Amended) A sales support data providing apparatus comprising:
means for transmitting an answer request to salesperson terminals, the answer request

requesting each terminal to input an answer choice to a selling method contained in the request;

means for receiving answer data from the terminals, the answer data of each terminal containing <u>a salesperson ID number and</u> an answer choice input by one of salespersons for the selling method;

means for storing the respective answer data corresponding to the salespersons cumulatively as an answer file, the answer file containing records which correspond to the <u>salesperson ID numbers and</u> answer data of the salespersons respectively;

means for extracting each record from the answer file <u>and reading a salesperson file containing shop ID numbers corresponding to salesperson ID numbers of the salespersons and a shop file containing respective attributes corresponding to the shop ID numbers</u> to increment each of total counts for one or more ~~of predetermined attributes~~<u>attribute groups each having an attribute matched with</u> ~~which are met by~~<u>an attribute corresponding to</u> a corresponding one of the ~~salespersons~~<u>salesperson ID numbers</u> for the extracted record; and

means for transmitting <u>each of</u> results of the total counts for said one or more ~~of the predetermined attributes~~<u>attribute groups</u> to <u>a corresponding one of</u> the salesperson terminals ~~which are related to the selling method~~<u>for a salesperson ID number corresponding to a shop ID number having the matched attribute corresponding to one of said one or more attribute groups, the salesperson ID number being obtained by reading of the salesperson file and the shop file</u>.

10. (NEW) A sales support information providing method comprising:

extracting sales records for a product, including a shop ID and attributes of a shop corresponding to said shop ID, and incrementing, for each extracted sales record, a count for a plurality of attribute groups each having an attribute matching an attribute corresponding to a shop ID corresponding to a requesting salesperson; and

transmitting results of the extracting and incrementing to a terminal of the requesting salesperson.